



BME Housing Associations and Stock Transfers

A Review One Year On

February 2007



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Campbell Tickell were commissioned in 2004 by the Housing Corporation and the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to see how Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Associations (BME HAs) could grow through stock transfers. The project focused on four pilot areas in Bradford, Tower Hamlets, Trafford, and Wakefield, and the Campbell Tickell team worked with BME HAs in each area. The main project report and good practice guidance was published in September 2005.

This document represents a 'one year on' review of progress since the 2005 report was issued. Having revisited the pilot areas and consulted key parties, the principal conclusions and recommendations are as follows.

Firstly, working with BME HAs has helped willing transfer associations provide a better service to BME communities by becoming more representative of the communities they serve; promoting greater community cohesion; improving organisational awareness of equality and diversity; and providing more new homes to regenerate unpopular areas and meet local BME and other housing needs.

For the BME HAs, joint working has led to some new business opportunities; the possibility of management arrangements; and in Bradford, a shared development programme.

In Bradford, Manningham HA has a real opportunity to grow substantially while building good quality larger homes and promoting community cohesion. In Tower Hamlets, Spitalfields HA has secured one and may potentially secure a further transfer. There may be opportunities for further involvement that need to be explored by the BME HAs. In Trafford and Wakefield, there seemed little immediate prospect of the BME HAs owning more homes through transfer.

BME HAs are often stretched to attend all the meetings that take place on local housing issues. There does appear to be a need for larger HAs and local authorities to consider how best to engage efficiently with BME HAs.

Overall, the main report has as yet had limited impact, largely because:

- It came too late to affect Stock Options Appraisals (that were to be completed by July 2005) and in three of the pilot areas, the main decision on transfer had already been taken;
- Most stock transfer decisions had been taken by the time of the report; and
- The Housing Corporation and the Department for Communities & Local Government, as the principal bodies in a position to focus on facilitation and enforcement of the recommendations, have not yet been able to tackle these effectively.

Where positive developments have taken place at local level, the key driver appeared to be the interest and commitment of individual senior members of staff and Board

Members within BME and transfer HAs who shared commitments to equality, diversity and fairness, and saw the mutual benefits of working with other organisations.

For the future, there is scope for greater collaboration between BME and other HAs. Good practice needs to be broadcast and all housing providers should have regard to it. Senior staff and Boards should adopt policies and practices that promote a culture of collaboration with other organisations, not just BME HAs. The Housing Corporation and Audit Commission should look for this culture of collaboration in their regulatory activities.

With collaboration between BME HAs, there is scope to develop their work with ALMOs (Arm's Length Management Organisations, managing their Councils' housing stock) and on estates where tenants have previously voted against stock transfer. The Housing Corporation should look at when and how this collaboration might be revenue funded.

Although there will be more stock transfers in future, they are reducing in number. Some stock transfer associations are either unable or unwilling to contemplate transfer of stock or management to BME HAs.

Funding arrangements seem in many cases to militate against secondary stock transfers, but many HAs have overcome or avoided this problem. This deserves further research, leading to the development of template documentation.

Collaboration between HAs may lead to stock or management transfer where there are specific cultural needs to meet. However, many BME HAs do not wish to deliver a monocultural service, seeing themselves as sensitive to and able to meet a range of needs for a diverse community, and wishing thereby to help promote community cohesion.

A number of practical recommendations have therefore emerged, in addition to those in our original report. These are that:

- (a) The Department for Communities & Local Government and the Housing Corporation should consider how to use their organisational and staffing structures to ensure an effective regional focus on involving BME HAs in stock transfer and helping them achieve greater sustainability;
- (b) The Corporation should ensure that good practice in relation to joint working with BME HAs is a requirement for all organisations receiving Social Housing Grant;
- (c) The CLG and the Corporation should explore options for revenue funding to assist BME HA collaboration post-Housing Choice in Tower Hamlets;
- (d) The Corporation should commission research into and the production of template documentation for funding stock transfers, that inter alia does not militate against subsequent secondary transfer;
- (e) The Corporation should publish the results of its continuing review of transfer associations' equality and diversity work;
- (f) The Corporation should update the targets in its Good Practice Note 4 (Race Equality and Diversity);

- (g) The Corporation should ensure that BME HAs are properly involved in partnerships receiving Social Housing Grant, and should evaluate the effectiveness of the involvement of BME HAs in the National Affordable Housing Programme 2006-08;
- (h) The Audit Commission should reconsider its practice of looking only at service outputs in inspection, given the evident importance of having the right staff in the right place to implement the policies outlined for these areas of work; if the Commission is unable to do this, the CLG should consider the matter;
- (i) The Corporation and CLG identify a clear timetable for implementation of the recommendations of the September 2005 report, in order that substantive progress can be reported by September 2007.

A. BACKGROUND

1. Campbell Tickell were commissioned in early 2004 by the Housing Corporation (HC) and the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM - now the Department for Communities and Local Government - CLG) to see how Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Associations (BME HAs) could grow through stock transfers. At that time, no stock transfer of tenanted housing had taken place from a local authority to a BME HA.
2. At the same time, four pilot projects led by BME HAs were funded, in Bradford, Tower Hamlets, Trafford, and Wakefield. The Campbell Tickell team worked with each pilot in its own area, and a national Steering Group was established, on which the pilots were represented. Having worked with the pilot projects and tracked local developments over an 18 month period, a report was produced. This set out key local developments and recommended good practice approaches in involving BME HAs in stock transfer, for the Housing Corporation, ODPM, Audit Commission, local authorities, BME and mainstream HAs.
3. The Campbell Tickell report was launched at the National Housing Federation Conference in Birmingham in September 2006. Steve Douglas, the Housing Corporation's Deputy Chief Executive, led a well attended and lively fringe session.



4. It was agreed at the time that the main report was issued, that a review one year later would be of value, to see:
 - Whether the recommendations in the report had been implemented;
 - Whether their implementation had helped BME HAs to grow;
 - What was happening on the ground, in terms of whether new lessons had been learnt and whether additional recommendations were needed;
 - Whether BME communities had benefited.

B. THE 'ONE YEAR ON' REVIEW

5. The review was carried out by visiting the area and meeting people closely involved with the stock transfer and BME HAs.
6. Visits and meetings took place in autumn 2006, involving the following organisations:
 - Arawak Walton Housing Association;
 - Bradford Community Housing Trust;
 - Labo Housing Association;
 - London Borough of Tower Hamlets;
 - Manningham Housing Association;
 - Sadeh Lok Housing Group;
 - Spitalfields Housing Association;
 - Trafford Housing Trust;
 - Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council;
 - Tung Sing Housing Association;
 - Wakefield & District Housing.
7. At the same time, the Housing Corporation, CLG and Audit Commission were asked for update information on progress to date in addressing the recommendations of the report.
8. The review was undertaken and this report prepared by John Clark, Asit Acharya, Ed Duguid, and Greg Campbell.

C. SUMMARY OF POSITION IN 2004/05

9. Each of the four pilot areas exhibited different characteristics at the time of the fieldwork for the main report.

	White British & other	Mixed	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Black – Caribbean	Black - African	Other
Wakefield	97.2%	0.5%	1.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	1.1%
Tower Hamlets	49.4%	2.5%	0.8%	33.3%	2.7%	3.4%	7.9%
Bradford	77.6%	1.5%	14.5%	1.1%	0.6%	0.2%	4.5%
Trafford	88.8%	1.5%	1.7%	0.1%	1.4%	0.3%	6.2%

Note that the above figures are taken from the Census 2001, which, according to some authorities, understates the numbers of young men and of refugees.

(a) **Wakefield**

A whole stock transfer of 34,000 homes to a new stand alone registered social landlord had been voted for by tenants and was underway. Sadeh Lok HG had seconded a member of staff to the Council pre-ballot, although the Formal Consultation Document had been silent on the issue of any role for BME HAs. The new transfer association – Wakefield & District Housing (WDH) – had entered into an agreement with Sadeh Lok (included as an annex to the Campbell Tickell report of September 2005).

(b) **Tower Hamlets**

The Boroughwide ‘Housing Choice’ programme was well underway, with some transfers taking place. Of the two BME HAs in the pilot, Labo HA had not been selected as the transfer RSL on any estate, although Spitalfields had been selected for three small estates.

(c) **Bradford**

The transfer had taken place of about all 25,000 Council owned homes to the group members (all RSLs) of Bradford Community Housing Trust (BCHT). A partnership with West City HT – a group member – had identified a number of sites for joint development with Manningham HA. During the fieldwork, funding was obtained for the joint redevelopment of a BCHT estate. With other HAs, Manningham set up Firebird Homes as a joint venture development vehicle. Manningham also joined Bradford’s choice based lettings scheme, which was run by BCHT.

(d) **Trafford**

As with Wakefield, Trafford tenants had already voted for the transfer of the 10,000 homes owned by Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC) to a single new stand alone registered social landlord, Trafford HT, when the fieldwork

began. The four local BME HAs – Aksa, Arawak Walton, Ashiana, and Tung Sing – were collaborating but discussions with Trafford HT progressed slowly until its new Chair and Chief Executive took office. Their enthusiasm led to agreement on joint working on a range of cultural change activities. Meanwhile, the Council had decided to have a third tier¹ officer to head their housing function. At the point of transfer, just 2% of THT tenants were from BME backgrounds, compared with 9% of the TMBC population (according to the Census 2001).

¹ i.e. below Assistant Director level

D. KEY FINDINGS OF THE 2005 REPORT

10. The key findings from the 2005 report were as follows.
- (a) **Local Authority BME Housing Strategies** are needed to create an open door for BME HAs and communities, based on local data on people and their needs.
 - (b) **Strategic frameworks enabling BME housing association involvement** – BME housing associations need strategic frameworks to encourage their active engagement and avoid abortive effort. The absence of such frameworks has significantly discouraged their past involvement.
 - (c) **Regional Housing Board strategies** must include BME issues. This is to ensure that funding addresses BME needs, and that the capacity of BME housing associations is not seen as a barrier. We note that most stock transfer organisations have gone from owning and managing nil to thousands of properties at a stroke.
 - (d) **A Housing Corporation role** on Equality and Diversity strategies is needed for new LSVTs (Large Scale Voluntary Transfer housing associations) and existing housing associations, both before and after transfer. This is to ensure that partnerships are formed with BME associations and that BME issues are addressed.
 - (e) **BME housing associations must be involved from the outset in strategic change.** There should be a real and open choice of transfer vehicles – not just the local authority choice. BME associations should be among the prospective vehicles or partners. ALMOs should be designed to work with BME housing associations, instead of feeling the need to defend themselves against BME associations.
11. Annex 1 reproduces a good practice checklist from the 2005 report.

E. ISSUES FROM LOCAL MEETINGS HELD IN AUTUMN 2006

12. The principal issues identified from the four pilot areas were as follows. The comments reflect the views expressed by those interviewed during the course of the review.

12.1 Bradford

- (a) Bradford Community Housing Trust (BCHT) had decided to merge its six individual trusts into a single organisation since the fieldwork had ended. The Director of West City HT had been appointed New Business & Development Director of BCHT. BCHT remained committed to the programme and to joint working with Manningham HA.
- (b) The first joint development between Manningham HA and BCHT at Whites Close had just been let (see picture on front cover of this report).
- (c) Annex 3 sets out the projects that were under discussion between Manningham HA and BCHT in Autumn 2006. Annex 4 sets out the ethnicity of the tenants of Manningham in March 2006. This diversity was seen as important to gain the confidence of existing White British BCHT tenants in Manningham HA as a new social landlord in their area. BCHT's support workers would assist new tenants in these circumstances.
- (d) While BCHT shared Manningham's commitment to promoting community cohesion through this programme, the Trust had not recognised a specific requirement from the Housing Corporation to do so.
- (e) The Housing Corporation still appeared to look at grant per home rather than grant per person, militating against the larger homes needed by many overcrowded BME households locally.

12.2 Tower Hamlets

- (a) The political landscape of Tower Hamlets now included the Respect Party, whose strong support within the local Bangladeshi community arose from Respect's opposition to the Iraq War. While, in the May 2006 elections, Labour retained a slim majority on the Council, Respect had adopted a position opposed to stock transfers and campaigned on this basis at estate level, obtaining a good deal of support from many of the Muslim households who formed a majority on a number of estates.
- (b) Partly as a result of this, one of the three estates that selected Spitalfields HA as its transfer partner had withdrawn from the Housing Choice process. The one of the three estates affected that had gone to ballot - Dinmont - produced a 93% vote in favour of transferring the 106 properties to the Association. The one remaining ballot - on Chicksands West Estate (187 properties), was expected to go to ballot during 2007.
- (c) Over the course of 2006, a significant number of estate ballots produced majorities against transfer. The Council had begun promoting an ALMO,

although not all estates with ballots against transfer were likely to be included within it.

- (d) It appeared that there might be further opportunities for BME HAs – especially if they worked together – to help the ALMO secure a 2 Star rating and possibly in due course to revisit some estates that had voted against transfer.

12.3 **Trafford**

- (a) The enthusiastic tone set by the new Chair and Chief Executive of Trafford Housing Trust (THT) had continued to deliver a creative and constructive alliance between BME HAs and THT
- (b) Annex 2 sets out an example of the role that BME HAs had been able to play in the recent sheltered housing review in Trafford. There appeared to be the possibility of a management agreement on some of THT's sheltered housing.
- (c) With the help of the BME HAs, THT was now making progress towards 15% of its staff being from BME backgrounds, as against 4% at transfer. However there were as yet no BME Board Members of the Trust.
- (d) Staff swaps were being planned between THT and BME HAs.
- (e) The Council had adopted a BME Housing Strategy in September 2005, and was now working with BME HAs through the BME Service Improvement Partnership. (The driver had seemed to be the relationship between BME HAs and THT). Although fora for discussion of these issues were being revived, BME HAs often found it hard to attend all possible meetings with other HAs and the Council because of their relatively small size and limited staff resources.
- (f) In relation to the Housing Corporation, there had been no recent opportunity to bid for revenue grant funding. The BME HAs were interested to establish whether any useful data or other information had emerged from the Housing Corporation's review of the Equality and Diversity Plans of new transfer organisations, and to establish whether similar issues had arisen in relation to ALMOs.
- (g) Further transfer opportunities had arisen in Stockport and Manchester. Compulsory pairing with a larger association in one case had confused tenants, and in another the scale seemed to militate against a BME HA being a serious competitor. The BME HAs considered that if:
- The local authority worked with them as a partner pre-ballot, the position would be made explicit in formal consultation, thus gaining the support of BME people in the ballot and increasing the potential for a role post-transfer; and
 - In the post-ballot stage, the BME HAs should be treated as full partners in the negotiations on the Transfer Agreement and the transfer association's compliance with Housing Corporation requirements, its business plan and funding arrangements; then

- The BME HAs would be a formal partner to the transfer association post-transfer, working on joint developments, community cohesion and assisting with the transfer association's Equality and Diversity work.
- (h) Tung Sing HA had not been shortlisted in its bid for stock transfer of Manchester City Council overspill estates in Stockport, even though the Association had joined the significantly larger Arena Housing Group. The Association is nonetheless optimistic of working with the successful transfer organisation, along with the other members of the local BME HAs partnership.

12.4 **Wakefield**

- (a) The expectations of working together by Wakefield & District Housing (WDH) and Sadeh Lok Housing Group (SLHG) that were embodied in their earlier agreement had not materialised fully. Although there was some joint working in operation, SLHG did not have the staff capacity to respond to the extent and/or with the speed that WDH needed.
- (b) A key Director centrally involved in the joint working with WDH had left SLHG during the past year. Contact was only now being remade at that level. This renewed contact might lead to a higher level of collaboration and removing some of the perceived obstacles that had made collaboration, such as staff swaps, difficult for SLHG to resource.
- (c) Neither the formal consultation document on which tenants were balloted nor the business plan that was used to secure private finance had mentioned the possibility of onward transfer. WDH's view now was that these factors made it extremely unlikely that a stock or land could be transferred from WDH to SLHG, even by trickle transfer. However, these factors had not previously been highlighted in the earlier fieldwork as obstacles per se to, for instance, trickle transfer of void properties to SLHG.

F. POSITIONS OF STATUTORY BODIES

13. The Housing Corporation

13.1 Since the main report of this project was launched in September 2005, there has been a presentation to London Field staff of the principal findings and recommendations for the Corporation, and a seminar for senior managers from North Fields. A further seminar, for managers from London and South Fields, is to be arranged.

13.2 Other relevant developments include:

- Adoption of the Corporation's BME Action Plan in August 2005 (as referred to in the 2005 report);
- The requirement that bids for Social Housing Grant funding under the National Affordable Housing Programme 2006-08 should include BME HA partners in areas with significant BME communities.

13.3 The Corporation has recently commissioned research into the effectiveness of the housing association sector in meeting the housing, cultural and other needs of BME communities. This project is due to report in spring 2007, and to be followed by a more in depth research programme examining key aspects of the subject. This is timely, given the now past April 2006 final target for HAs to achieve the standards of performance on race equality and diversity set out in the Corporation's Good Practice Note 4.

13.4 Given (a) the review of the roles of the Corporation and English Partnerships leading to the decision to establish Communities England, and (b) the recently announced Cave review of regulation, the Corporation has been through considerable change in the past year. It has indicated that it will be appropriate to return to look at its progress in implementing the report recommendations in some six months' time.

14. Communities and Local Government

14.1 There have been significant changes for the Department in the past year, established new albeit taking over the responsibilities for housing and local government from the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Alongside this, CLG is now responsible for tackling race and faith inequalities in education, health, housing, the criminal justice system, and the labour market, and for promoting community cohesion. It has established a Race, Cohesion and Faiths Directorate to lead this work.

14.2 The Department has recently published a one year on progress review in implementing the Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion '*Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society*', which was launched in January 2005. The review includes a section on housing, which addresses such aspects as Decent Homes, homelessness, choice based lettings, and low

demand. It does not address such matters as stock transfer and the position of BME HAs.

- 14.3 There are also various key questions such as clarity over responsibility for the work of the former Community Housing Taskforce, and the interface between ALMOs and BME HAs.
- 14.4 In common with the Corporation, in the light of the changes that the Department has been through over the past year, it too has indicated that it will be appropriate to return to considering progress in implementing the 2005 report recommendations in six months' time.

15. **Audit Commission**

- 15.1 The Audit Commission has been undertaking a review of its Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) used in its inspections of housing services (for local authorities, ALMOs and housing associations). While a number of the KLOEs have already been covered, this review is still in progress at the time of writing.
- 15.2 Areas highlighted in the 2005 report on BME HAs and stock transfer, which the Commission will now inspect, are whether:
- The organisation being inspected has an effective BME Housing Strategy in place, which identifies, takes account of and addresses local community needs; and
 - The organisation has in place effective arrangements to engage with local BME communities, BME community organisations and BME housing associations in all housing related strategic change development and delivery.
- 15.3 Areas identified in the 2005 report that relate to KLOEs currently being reviewed by the Commission, and on which consultation commenced in January 2007, are whether:
- The organisation has effective mechanisms in operation to ensure that tenants/residents from all sections of the community are encouraged and supported in tenant/resident involvement; and
 - The organisation has reviewed its allocations policy and practice to ensure that there is no discrimination in the letting of homes, in relation to property location and condition.
- 15.4 Areas identified in the 2005 report that the Commission feels are not appropriate for it to examine are whether:
- Potential BME housing association roles and BME issues were identified at stock options stage, and are being addressed in relation to proposed stock transfers; and
 - Whether the Council promoted open and informed discussion on the nature of the proposed transfer housing association(s).

- 15.5 The following area is judged by the Commission to be a process issue that is not formally addressed in inspection:
- Whether the organisation employs senior staff from BME backgrounds, and has in place training/mentoring programmes to assist the career development of BME staff.

G. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

16. We set out below our findings and recommendations from this 'One Year On' review.

17. Collaboration

17.1 Working with BME HAs has helped willing transfer associations provide a better service to BME communities by:

- Addressing issues of staff generally becoming more representative of the communities they serve;
- Promoting greater community cohesion;
- Improving organisational awareness and commitment to equality and diversity; and
- Providing more new homes to regenerate unpopular areas and meet local BME and other housing needs.

17.2 For the BME HAs, joint working has led to:

- Some new business opportunities in assisting transfer associations;
- Participation in some local housing strategic review processes;
- The possibility of management arrangements; and
- In Bradford, a shared development programme.

18. Growth

18.1 In Bradford, Manningham has a real opportunity to grow substantially while making significant contributions to building good quality larger homes and promoting community cohesion.

18.2 In Tower Hamlets, Spitalfields has secured one and may potentially secure a further transfer. There may be opportunities for further involvement that need to be explored by the BME HAs – perhaps with Housing Corporation or DCLG revenue funding, if an appropriate funding stream can be identified.

18.3 In Trafford and Wakefield, there seems little immediate prospect of the BME HAs owning more homes through transfer. Even management seems improbable in Wakefield.

19. Capacity

19.1 BME HAs are often stretched to attend all the meetings that take place on local housing issues. There does appear to be a need for larger HAs and local authorities to consider how best to engage efficiently with BME HAs. In some areas, there are multiple meetings with overlapping agendas. This is not beneficial to any organisation. It militates particularly against BME HAs, which are generally quite small, and are often further stretched by their wider role in relation

to the communities they serve. For the same reason, BME HAs often had difficulty responding to unplanned requests for assistance from beyond their principal areas of operation.

20. Local authorities

20.1 The role of the local housing authority in providing either a policy lead or policy requirements was at best marginal in assisting the BME HAs in developing their role post-transfer.

21. The Housing Corporation

21.1 The Corporation has had a range of challenges to address in the past year, including significant changes to its investment programme, a programme of departmental/team restructuring, and a review of the organisation's role and links with English Partnerships, leading to the decision to create Communities England. With this background, the Corporation's attention appears to have been diverted temporarily from areas highlighted in the 2005 report.

21.2 The Corporation has located responsibility for promoting equality and diversity policy and practice within its corporate Policy and Communications Directorate. However, it appears that the roll-out of this policy within its field offices is patchy, for instance in relation to practical initiatives to support BME HAs' growth and sustainability.

21.3 We therefore recommend that the Corporation considers how it can use its organisational and staffing structures to ensure an effective regional focus on these areas, that is not subsumed beneath other corporate priorities and demands. At the same time, it should work to ensure that this principle is also reflected in the planned structures for Communities England.

22. Communities and Local Government

22.1 CLG is a new Department, and while containing the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's housing and local government responsibilities, now brings together central government's responsibilities in the areas of equality and diversity. As with the Housing Corporation then, the past year has been a time of considerable change. There were no specific matters on which the CLG appeared to have promoted BME HAs' roles in the areas addressed in the 2005 report.

22.2 We recommend that the Department reconsiders the application of recommendations of the 2005 report, and considers the effectiveness of its liaison arrangements with the Housing Corporation in respect of equality and diversity policy.

23. **Audit Commission**

- 23.1 Audit Commission inspection broadly focuses on outputs and results rather than on processes and history. To that extent, the Commission's comments summarised at paragraph 15 above appear reasonable. Rigorous inspection of the areas identified at 15.2 and 15.3 should be of benefit in the context of the areas considered in this report.
- 23.2 Nonetheless, the issue of whether housing organisations employ senior staff from BME backgrounds, and have in place training/mentoring programmes to assist the career development of BME staff, is significant and has wider implications. If the Commission is unable to address this, then it is an area that we would recommend CLG should consider.

24. **The future**

24.1 Collaboration

There is scope for greater collaboration between BME and other HAs – whether the latter are stock transfer based or not. Good practice needs to be broadcast and all HAs should be required to have regard to it. Equality and Diversity Plans should explicitly comment on the potential for such collaboration. Senior staff and Boards should adopt policies and practices that promote a culture of collaboration with other organisations, not just BME HAs. The Housing Corporation and Audit Commission should look for this culture of collaboration in their regulatory activities.

With collaboration between BME HAs – especially where one or more have development skills – there is scope to develop BME HAs' work with ALMOs and on estates where tenants have previously voted against stock transfer. The Housing Corporation should look at when and how this collaboration might be revenue funded.

24.2 BME HA business growth

Although there will be more stock transfers in future, they are reducing in number. Some stock transfer associations are either unable or unwilling to contemplate transfer of stock or management to BME HAs.

Funding arrangements – especially with the private sector – seem in many cases to militate against secondary stock transfers (and not only from transfer associations to BME HAs), but many HAs have overcome or avoided this problem. This deserves further consideration. The Housing Corporation should commission research into the effects of funding arrangements and requirements on stock transfer options between HAs, leading to the production of template documentation.

Collaboration between HAs may lead to stock or management transfer where there are specific cultural needs to be met. However, many BME HAs do not wish to deliver a monocultural service, seeing themselves as sensitive to and able to meet a range of needs for a diverse community, and wishing thereby to help promote community cohesion.

The Housing Corporation required mainstream HAs bidding for Social Housing Grant under the National Affordable Housing Programme 2006-08 to confirm the involvement of BME RSLs as their partners in the bids process, where there were significant BME communities. The results of this should be evaluated by the Corporation to inform future allocations of funds.

25. Overall Conclusions

25.1 The main report (from September 2005) has as yet had limited impact, largely because:

- It was too late to affect Stock Options Appraisals (that were to be completed by July 2005) and in three of the pilot areas, the main decision on transfer had already been taken;
- Most stock transfer decisions had been taken by the time of the report; and
- The Housing Corporation and Communities & Local Government, as the principal bodies in a position to focus on facilitation and enforcement of the recommendations, have not yet been able to tackle these effectively.

25.2 Where positive developments have taken place at local level, the key driver appeared to be the interest and commitment of individual senior members of staff and Board Members within BME and transfer HAs who shared commitments to equality, diversity and fairness, and saw the mutual benefits of working with other organisations. This is not, however, to be relied upon and has clearly not delivered concrete results in all cases.

25.3 A number of practical recommendations have therefore emerged, in addition to those in our original report. These are that:

- (a) Communities & Local Government and the Housing Corporation should consider how to use their organisational and staffing structures to ensure an effective regional focus on involving BME HAs in stock transfer and helping them achieve greater sustainability, and this should be rolled forward into the developing structures for Communities England;
- (b) The Corporation should ensure that good practice in relation to joint working with BME HAs is a requirement for all organisations receiving Social Housing Grant;
- (c) CLG and the Corporation should explore options for revenue funding to assist BME HA collaboration post-Housing Choice in Tower Hamlets;
- (d) The Corporation should commission research into and the production of template documentation for funding stock transfers, that inter alia does not militate against subsequent secondary transfer;

- (e) The Corporation should publish the results of its continuing review of transfer associations' equality and diversity work;
- (f) The Corporation should update the targets in its Good Practice Note 4 (Race Equality and Diversity);
- (g) The Corporation should ensure that BME HAs are properly involved in partnerships receiving Social Housing Grant, and should evaluate the effectiveness of the involvement of BME HAs in the National Affordable Housing Programme 2006-08;
- (h) The Audit Commission should reconsider its practice of looking only at service outputs in inspection, given the evident importance of having the right staff in the right place to implement the policies outlined for these areas of work; if the Commission is unable to do this, the DCLG should consider the matter;
- (i) The Corporation and CLG should identify a clear timetable for implementation of the recommendations of the September 2005 report, in order that substantive progress can be reported by September 2007.

Annex 1

**BME HAs and Stock Transfers
GOOD PRACTICE CHECKLIST**

(from the 2005 report)

	ODPM	LAs	ITA	AC	HC	BME HAS	Transfer HAS
(a) BME Housing Associations need to be involved in Councils' strategic activities, e.g. Stock Options Appraisals and developing their BME Housing Strategies, and to be involved before any ALMO or transfer proposals are developed	√	√	√	√		√	
(b) Councils should ensure that their communication strategies and practices enable BME Housing Associations to play a full part in strategy making and delivery		√		√			
(c) Transfer Associations – especially new LSVTs - need to identify how partnerships can help contribute to business aims and identify time and develop skills to ensure effective partnership working. Additional resources and requirements to achieve this may be required in their first year				√	√	√	√
(d) All Transfer Associations – new and existing - should be required to assist in implementing all aspects – including the BME aspects – of Councils' housing strategies		√		√		√	√
(e) This should apply to all housing association group members – not only at group level					√		√
(f) ODPM and the Housing Corporation through their regulatory and advisory roles and the ITA through their advisory role can play key roles in ensuring that issues facing BME communities are identified and addressed effectively and at an early stage in a stock transfer, and that doors to collaboration post transfer are opened rather than closed in formal consultation.	√		√		√		
(g) BME Housing Associations can play a valuable role in both identifying and addressing these issues; joint working where practical will make this much more effective.						√	
(h) BME Housing Associations that receive Social Housing Grant from the Housing Corporation have		√			√	√	

	ODPM	LAs	ITA	AC	HC	BME HAS	Transfer HAS
valuable resources and skills to offer Transfer Associations – particularly in the early days following transfer.							
(i) Local collaboration between BME Associations gives them the critical mass to work with the local authorities and new Transfer Associations, and to contribute knowledge, networking and practical solutions.						√	
(j) LAs should have BME Housing Strategies developed through a proper process, which involves BME HAS (who need not be locally based) in development and delivery.	√	√		√			
(k) The HC should give priority for the application of IGP funding to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Facilitating collaboration between BME HAS to increase the effectiveness of the contributions in stock transfers and other major strategic change; (ii) Ensure that BME HAS are able to resource their effective engagement in the creation of and setting the strategic aims of new development partnerships, so that their special contribution in post stock transfer developments is accessed most easily. 	√				√		

Annex 2

ARAWAK WALTON HOUSING ASSOCIATION: INVOLVEMENT IN TRAFFORD SHELTERED HOUSING REVIEW

1. Trafford Housing Trust: Analysis of Stock, Customers and Potential

We were directly involved in the steering group that drafted the brief, selected consultants and guided the project that undertook the review. We also provided direct evidence to the consultants in respect of the needs / aspirations of BME elders and our success and issues in terms of our own provision.

Whilst I have seen extracts the consultants final report and recommendations has only recently been presented to THT Board (July / August 06) and the steering group is due to meet to discuss and take the action plan forward.

We anticipate that the action plan will include elements targeted in respect of the BME community including:

- Marketing
- Support mechanisms
- Issues of location and design.
- Consultation and Monitoring
- Scheme management opportunities for BME RSL's

2. Trafford LA: Review of Sheltered Housing Provision and Services

Running alongside the above, though started slightly later, is a review coordinated by the LA in respect of all elderly social Housing Provision which engaged all RSL's with Cat 1, 2 and Cat 2.5 provision within the borough. The aim being to take a more strategic stance to the coordination and development of provision.

This group has only met a couple of times and has begun the process of collecting base data on provision and issues. No clear pattern of direction has emerged as yet although there is a general awareness of the need to engage with the BME community and this will be a strand of the approach.

Ron Brannon
Arawak Walton
September 2006

Annex 3

BRADFORD COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST - MANNINGHAM HOUSING ASSOCIATION: JOINT DEVELOPMENTS PROPOSED (as at September 2006)

Site	Homes		BCHT area	Stage at September 2006
	MHA	BCHT		
Whites Close	9	12	W	completed
Birch Lee	3	0	W	Cleared land
Nurser Lee	3	0	W	Cleared land
Hustler Street	9	12	W	Cleared land – about to start work
Priestman Street	4	0	W	Cleared land
Quaker Lee	4	0	W	Cleared land
The Cabin	4	0	W	Cleared land
r/o Clayton Road	4	0	W	Cleared land
Burnham Avenue	9	23	E	Cleared land
Otley Road	25 inc s/o	0	W	Being decanted
Wilson Road	7 s/o	0	S	Cleared land
11 Sites	81	47	3	

Annex 4

**ETHNICITY OF MANNINGHAM HOUSING ASSOCIATION TENANTS
(as at March 2006)**

